FO32 Mongo FO32
Teke FI33
Sakata FO43

to burial, the deceased is laid out in the mortuary hut. Relatives, friends, and acquaintances sit up with the body in turn. Night and day, plaintive and monotonous chants commemorate the high deeds of the deceased, his glory, his qualities, his wealth, his power, his whole life. The burial is carried out with great pomp and ends with a general consumption of the whole supply of palm wine, malafu, and masanga [Ed., sugar-cane beer].

T 764

T [273]

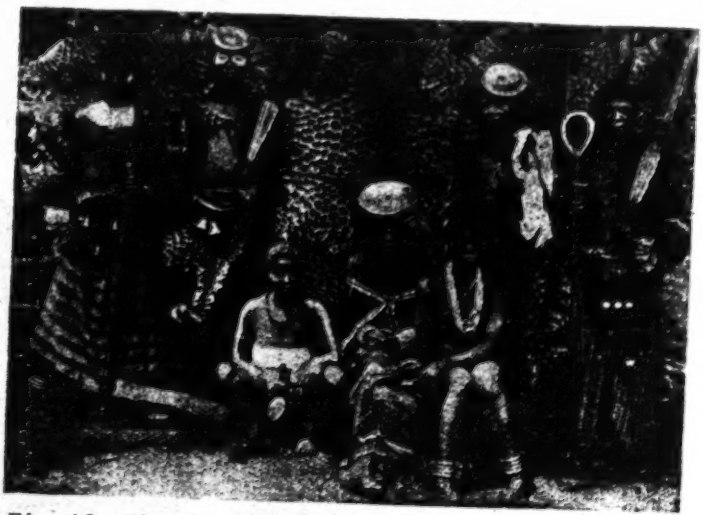

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Fig. 16. Ebandia, Chief of the Mosengere, Two Favorite Wives, and Principal Dignitaries.

M 764

The peoples of Lake Leopold II place the corpse in a wooden coffin. Those of the Lukenie region wrap it in mats. Both groups bury the deceased the day after death.

The cemeteries are located outside the village. The relatives lay out a few broken utensils on the grave. If the deceased was a hunter of repute, they plant a long staff upon the grave, and the skull of some animal killed by the dead man is attached at the top of it. [27]

S 766 845 761

During my stay in the territory of the Baboma-Banfumu of Bokala, I was struck by the presence of a tiny hut in the center of Chief Pokei's village. It was about 60 centimeters high, 30 centimeters wide, and 50 centimeters long. I thought at first

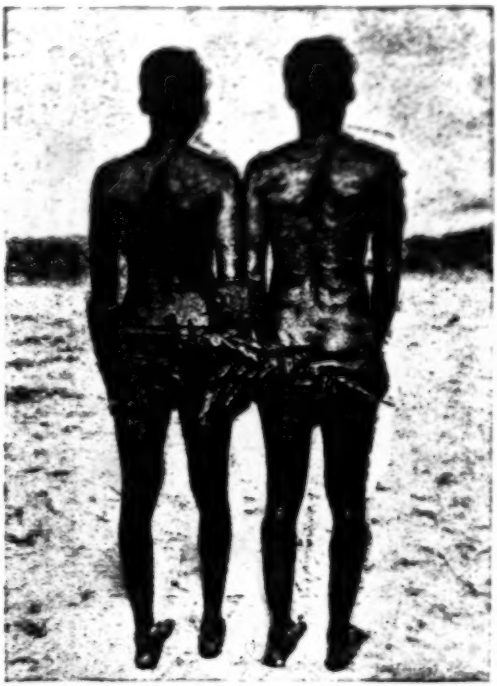
301 Among the peoples of Lake Leopold II, hair ornaments are rare. Hairpins seem to be unknown; combs are made of raffia splints. A woman prefers ornaments of metal, iron, brass, or copper, while the chiefs and great dignitaries like to wear belts, necklaces, bracelets, and trimmed with cowries. The necklace of solid brass is very popular. The heavier it is, the more it is liked. We saw women wearing necklaces weighing as much as 25 pounds. These necklaces are riveted around the necks of the favorite wives of great chiefs or wealthy

[292 293 622]

Fig. 104. Native Chief of Lake Leopold II and his Counselor, Highest Dignitary of the Tribe, both in Dress Costume.

[586] dignitaries. In case of divorce or separation, the owner of the necklaces removes them without regard for the suffering or cries of the victim. The women seem to be in no way inconvenienced by these cumbersome ornaments. On rare instances they wrap cloth around them to keep them from rubbing against the collarbone. [183]

reserved to the Mfumu. The large royal knife, encased in a sheath, hung from a brass chain worn diagonally over the shoulder, and Kakua [187] never parted with his great bow and his quiver of arrows with large iron heads. 643 293 301



[304 301 535]

Fig. 109. Dancing Costume of the Yaelima-Bokala of the Wumbuli Region. Tattooing on the Back.

During dances and ceremonies the women attach the most unusual objects around their waists, often large bushy branches. Among the Ipanga and Batitu, as well as in the region of Wumbuli and Dekese, betrothal and wedding dances are executed in special attire, heavily bedecked with beads and cowries. 292 301 535

These ornaments are not at all consistent. They vary according to taste and the whims and means of the natives, but certain parts of the dress costume worn by the betrothed couple at the dances celebrating the engagement seem to have a special meaning, to which we shall return later.

1. Clothing. Nudity.

291
855 Until he has reached the age of discretion and even a little later, the Nkundó child wears nothing more around his loins than a belt of beads or a plain string usually adorned with some amulet. Nobody is shocked by this rudimentary attire. Parents take great interest in the adornment of their children; from a very early age
[301] they are seen wearing belts of trading beads, bracelets, rings around the ankles made of iron, copper, or brass, and in addition, at the present time, glass beads above the knees.

291 As the child grows older the clothing increases. From the outset there are differences on the basis of sex.

The boy acquires a thin strip of cloth which is attached to his string or belt simply by folding back the two ends. The cloth falls between his legs without being tight, allowing for great freedom of movement and the circulation of air; this is an excellent precaution against perspiration due to extreme heat, but it is not very effective protection against indiscreet looks, at least in certain positions. The fabric made of raffia may be decorated to a greater or a lesser extent. In former times there existed different kinds, which we need not describe here. The length of the hanging borders is dictated by vanity. The string was often replaced by a raffia belt or -- among prominent men -- by a leather thong.

The woman's garment consists of a broad raffia belt whose two ends are gradually narrowed, ending in cords which are tied on the [53] stomach. In the center of this belt (nkísí (1) a ball of raffia

1. Or bokangá, bokangá wá nkísí. Among the Bombwanja it is called likóngâ.

fibers is attached (bonkoko). A piece of cloth (efufa or lofufa) whose width may vary from 3 centimeters to 20 centimeters or more, depending on the age and the wearer's intensity of the feeling of modesty, is attached to the cords and falls more or less low on the body. For a
[292] feast or display the efufa is replaced with a more valuable and longer
[854] piece of cloth (intólo or, among the Elángá of Losanganya, ifika).

606 the act of procreation on the part of one of them. Perhaps this idea is latent in the native mind, or at least is at the basis of this rule. The fact that this hypothesis applies only to the wife's mother-in-law [mother?] does not weaken it; for in native eyes [291] the other instances are entirely without importance. (1)

1. See, for example, Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter V, Articles II and III.

606 292 Another regulation pertaining to the mother-in-law requires that she -- and all the women who are given the same title in current usage -- may appear in her son-in-law's village only when dressed in a bolelɛkɛ. A bolelɛkɛ is a banana leaf, either green or dried, which has been torn in several places perpendicularly to the large [765] central rib, and constitutes the first and principal sign of mourning. Moreover, Batswa women must also dress in this manner before entering a Baotɔ settlement. The following reason is given for the rule in the second instance: a Botswɛ woman's dress consists of a lolimbɛ, a belt of small braided ropes about 10 centimeters long. Although in ordinary positions the lolimbɛ provides fairly good protection, it is not considered adequate to really stop all indiscreet looks. And it is popularly believed that if a Baotɔ sees a Botswɛ woman's genital organs, she will die. Might we conclude from this last explanation that there is a fundamental connection between the reasons that necessitate the wearing of a bolelɛkɛ in these three instances? Or is the mother-in-law to imitate a Botswɛ woman and thus show a certain subordination to her son-in-law?

2. Female relatives

607 837 As long as they are free, that is, as long as no bride-price payment has been made for them, a woman's sisters or cousins are considered by her husband as his wives, and he calls them so (bafɛlɛ). This term is applied only to relatives of a generation below that of the true wife or to members of the same generation who are younger than she and with whom marriage [292] is permitted. It is therefore never

great ceremonies because they lack the necessary wealth.

The bomfitsa is never nkfindf. But before he makes one of his wives a nkfindf a husband must ask the advice and approval of the bomfitsa. For that purpose he presents her with a bompfingf (a dog, a goat, some rings), which expresses his recognition of her right and authority and at the same time is intended to secure a favorable response. If the bomfitsa does not agree, the matter is not followed through. But that situation is only hypothetical. In practice the bomfitsa yields to her husband's preferences, since he has recognized her rights in the proper fashion.

When a husband wants to create a nkfindf, he first makes all the preparations, brews the sugar-cane beer and collects all the riches that are to be distributed. Then he invites the neighboring villages and calls together his relatives. On the assigned day, the assembly having gathered, the chosen wife puts on her most beautiful garments and adorns herself with her richest ornaments. She seats herself on a magnificent bofinga [345] (a portable couch) (1)

1. See the excellent drawing in Engels, Les Wangata [The Wangata], (Revue Congolaise, Vol. 1, no. 4, p. 483, 1910).

in front of the audience. Her husband then announces to those assembled that henceforth this woman is to be his favorite; woe unto the man who has the temerity to seduce her or even show affection toward her -- he will be a dead man (or he will have to pay an enormous indemnity of 25 to 50 bakonga). In the past it often happened that a seducer was killed or reduced to slavery without further ado. When the husband has paid 25 rings or more to the wife's family and gifts have been distributed to the assembled patriarchs, his words are ratified by the assembly, and henceforth the contract between them and the husband is sealed. Dances, song, and drink follow.

The favorite wears no special garb. She wears the same clothing as all the other women and wears furs only for dances.

[315] [317] On the day set aside for establishing the position of the bolémbé, there is a great feast. All the clans and neighboring villages that have been invited gather at the home of the polygamist in question. He presents the woman to them and addresses the gathering: "Here is the woman whom I want to make my bolémbé, as I have already announced to you. Today I am making public the decision I already made a long time ago. Be it known to all that no man may touch her, or he will be severely punished." Then two women (in rare instances, two men) hold the woman, and the husband unfastens her belt and rips off all her clothing. Then the assistants tie a rope or a belt of mpangé (striped antelope) skin around her, and to it they attach various furs. From that day [321] until her death she may no longer wear the clothing (bitóo) of other women; she must always [350] be dressed in furs. Hence her name, bolémbé wa ikúfú, "bolémbé with furs." Then her husband gives her pots of palm oil with which she will have to cover herself. Two men approach her; they are chosen among the handsomest in the village (1) (married or single) and are

[301]

1. They are then (sic) relatives of the husband. Nkundó law dictates that no stranger shall perform a function of the slightest importance -- not even that of silencing a gathering. According to their saying, bofaya *fifigla* lokéanga, "a stranger does not cut up a guinea hen."

[301] richly adorned with furs, belts of mpangé, beads, raffia fabrics with jagged edges, copper rings on their ankles, etc. Stepping [323] in rhythm, they lead her to the house intended for her which is [324] surrounded by a fence of bofaka posts (Ricinodendron africanum) held together with palms. This hut with its fence is called lóka.

There the bolémbé will reside for months and years (up to three or more, they say). She is secluded there, so to speak, [324] and may not go out. If she needs to go to the banana groves for her personal needs, she covers and surrounds herself with a mat so that no one will see her.

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

fear of death would deter him from such baseness. Another sign of the chosen successor is some untoward experience, such, for example, as finding cowrie shells (worn by *nkumu*) in a trap in the forest or a net that had been put out to catch fish.

Nkumu Akulu, whether the first of his line or a man succeeding in the office, bears the emblems of his rank. He wears an *ilokondo* (a branch of a special bush) stuck into his belt on the right side and hanging downwards. The special hat, *mwanda*, worn by *nkumu* is not yet his to wear, but he wears an ordinary skin hat known as *lopoto*, which is the mark of any elder. This hat may be ornamented with feathers if so desired.

When *Nkumu Akulu* decides that he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him properly to claim the right of being made an *nkumu*, he begins his preparatory arrangements. *Mbili*, a mixture of charcoal with some sticky substance, is smeared over his body with plantain leaves. All ornamented clothing is discarded and a single cloth woven from raffia, and known as *nsaka*, is worn. He refuses to sit on the benches usually used and instead sits on the bare earth. All this is explained as an attempt on the part of the man about to be raised to the office of *nkumu* to be different from others, a man apart, separate, peculiar, not partaking in the ordinary interests and affairs of his fellow men.

Nkumu Akulu now leaves his own village accompanied by all his wives and children, and also by a singer, *nyombe*, who is paid to sing his praises, and by several male Batwa (pygmies), up to half a dozen in number, known as *atoti* because of their duty of blowing gourds and producing sounds which indicate praise of the great man. This party makes the round of villages wherever relatives are found, and the announcement is made that *Nkumu Akulu* is about to become an *nkumu*. This pilgrimage accomplished, a 'doctor' (*nkanga*) is visited by the aspirant to office, who seeks by magic to discover whether it is the propitious time for the ceremony of installation. The whole company retires to the private enclosure at the rear of the house belonging to the *nkanga* chosen, this being the place where he performs his wonders. The *nkanga* resorts to *nsinga*, that particular branch of magic which has to do with reasons for strange and unaccountable phenomena.[1] *Nkumu Akulu* now seeks some sign as confirmation of his determination to claim his office at this time. Some native pepper may be wrapped in a leaf or merely covered by it, and left within sight of all, and upon being opened it may be found to have turned into salt, or perhaps it may be some earth that is thus turned to salt. Or a cock may be placed upon *Nkumu Akulu*'s head and covered with a basket and thus left for some time. Upon removing the basket it may be discovered that an egg has been laid. All such tests, if successful, will be regarded as indications that it really is time for *Nkumu Akulu* to assume the office of *nkumu*, but if the test fails he will usually go ahead with his plans anyhow, fearing the shame that would come to him should he go back to his home after having made the triumphant round of his relatives' homes. However, should he act thus, and he most certainly will, he knows that his days are numbered,

[1] If a man's fields do not produce and he cannot understand why, he will resort to *nsinga*. If it is suspected, for example, that the trouble is caused by someone making 'medicine', an arrow shaft is put into a small hole in the ground, and as each name mentioned, the arrow can be pulled out if the person is innocent, but remains stuck fast in the hole at the mention of the guilty name.

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Mantsh, the hat worn by the nkumu as the symbol of his office

[facing page 434]

Now the molombe leave the B.loga.

624 *Okala*, a young woman of their own number, who will thereafter be known by this
[533] name. She is an official cymbalist and must always begin beating before others may join in. In reality the members of the *molombe* have decided beforehand who shall be chosen for this position, and the woman of their choice now takes her stand on the elevation together with *Nkumu Akala* and his wife, *Nsumu*.

624 The member of the *molombe* whose right it is by inheritance to place the *mantolo*
● 282 (see Plates) upon the head of the *nkumu* now comes forward with it. This hat, about twelve inches in height, is woven of raffia and cylindrical in shape, but the brim, instead of being at the base, encircles the top of the crown. It is usually decorated with a burnished brass plate attached to the front, and perhaps a second one behind, and in these modern days it is quite in style to hang a row of safety pins from the 'brim' or 'halo' encircling the crown. When the *nkumu* is the first of his line, the *mantolo* is purchased by him, but in the case of succession it is that used by the deceased predecessor, and has been kept by the *molombe* until this time. It is his badge of office and sign of authority. The bringing out of the *mantolo* is an occasion for
624 merriment. *Nkumu Akala* calls for his *mantolo*, but the *molombe* tease and tantalize him and ask for money. The amount is a fixed sum, but *Nkumu Akala* pays out at first but a few rods, is teased for more, and so on until he has provided the total amount, usually about one hundred. The member of the *molombe* whose duty it is to place the *mantolo* on the head of the *nkumu* begins to tease the crowd. He chooses various names by which the *nkumu* might be called, everybody knowing all the time what his name must be. He asks the people, 'Shall we call him so-and-so?' 'We refuse', reply the people. 'Or so-and-so?' 'We refuse.' And each time names whereby *nkumu* are known are repeated. Finally the correct name is given, as, 'Shall we call him *Nkumu Lokondola*?' and the crowd roars its approval, 'Ooooo!' The *mantolo* then being placed on *Nkumu Akala's* head he now becomes *Nkumu* and leaps down among the crowd, who bear him off to their village with rejoicing. In the choice of names, the first *nkumu* in a village is known as *Nkumu Lokondola*. If there is another section of the village with an *nkumu* of its own, he must take another name, such as *Nkumu Iyali Bokonga*. Successors must always take the names of their predecessors whatever their own personal names may be. An *nkumu* chosen by a *molombe*
[554] which is also the *nsumu mokondo*, the hereditary owner of the land, is known as *Nkumu e Botindi* (*Nkumu* of the heels), for he occupies a more important position than his fellows, and is thus the support which holds up the whole group of *nkumu* chosen by other *molombe*.

624 The *nkumu* is borne off to his *nsaka*, his residence, which in this case is temporary,
392 to be replaced later by a permanent one. The *nsaka* comprises the whole unit of buildings for the *nkumu*, including his own sleeping quarters, the houses for his wives, the *ekunga* where he spends the daylight hours, and a row of houses for his children. His *ekunga* and his own sleeping quarters are screened from the public gaze, making
[351] a place known as *ifuma*. In the case of a new *nkumu* the screen is temporary, but when the permanent *nsaka* is built, a permanent *ifuma* is made by planting umbrella trees (*mokondo*, sing. *mokondo*) in a rectangular or circular fashion. Here, sheltered
624 from intrusion, the *nkumu* remains in retirement (*andi*) for a month.[1] While he remains

[1] *Andi* refers to the living of a hen on eggs, *nkumu* at this juncture of the ceremonies, the seclusion of a woman after childbirth, or of the

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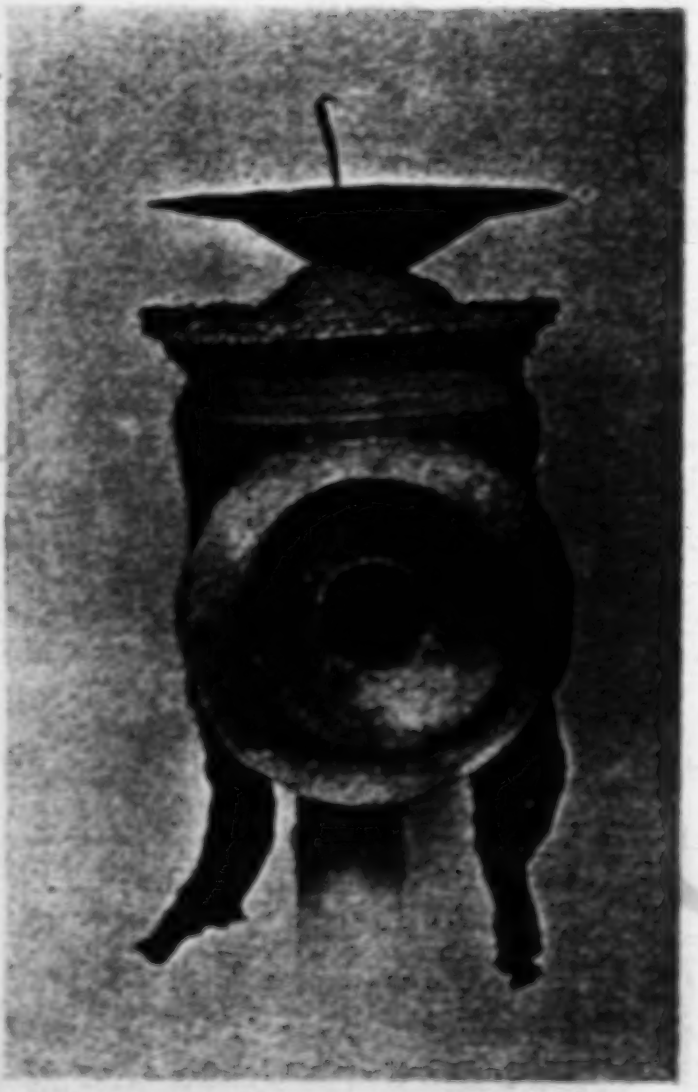

Mantsh, the hat worn by the slaves as the symbol of his office

[facing page 435]

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Ntomba

no compulsion. If one of the contracting parties fails to fulfil its pledges in this matter of giving part of the kill, or in anything else, the aggrieved party may call the council together. This consists not only of members of the *mokonzo* and *okapa*, but of all elders of the village or villages connected with this particular one. The party judged in the wrong, whether *okapa* or *mokonzo*, will be fined, the injured party receiving its share, and both parties will be charged to live together harmoniously and observe their contracts.

The power of the *nkumu* was apparently limited, and did not supersede that of the *monene mokonzo*. When trials came up, the aggrieved party might go either to the *monene mokonzo* or to the *nkumu*. If it was necessary to call the village elders together about it, both these authorities were present at the hearing. First the young men of the group were allowed to give their verdict, then the old men, after that *monene mokonzo* (or the *mokonzi o ele*), and finally the *nkumu* was given the privilege of the last word. He would comment on the opinions of each of the judges, criticizing one young man, commending another, and then giving his own verdict, at which the group would assent by saying, 'Even so, grandfather'. The whole group of judges would then fix the fines, a double portion of which went to the *nkumu*.

The actual manual labour which an *nkumu* may do excludes anything endangering life or limb, or requiring agility and speed. He may clear the bush for his gardens: this is a man's work. He may take part in the building of his houses, but may do no high work, and, among the inland groups, it is the work of the Barwa to put the roof on for him. The *nkumu* may also prepare pitfalls for catching game, but cannot engage in any other type of hunting or do any fishing. Digging a grave is prohibited, for, as we shall see, everything pertaining to death must be ignored by the *nkumu*.

Other rules affecting the daily life of the *nkumu* may be roughly divided into three: those affecting his person, those having to do with his food, and social regulations.

One of the great points of observance in the first class of regulations is the impenetrance of the *mantsh*. The *nkumu* must on no account be seen during daylight hours with an uncovered head. If he wishes relief from the cumbersome *mantsh* he may take it off in the darkness of his house and put on an ordinary hat made of skins, and when night falls he may walk where he will bareheaded if he so desires. The skin hat, known as *lindo*, may be made from two animals only, in the case of an *nkumu*, one being the *okalapa*, a species of antelope with light-coloured hair, and the other the *fimbo*, an animal resembling a beaver. The skin of the *okalapa* may be used by anyone, but the *fimbo* is reserved for the *nkumu* only with one exception. The skin of the *fimbo* may also be used for the carrying strap for infants known as *nyamba*, which is worn over one shoulder in bandolier fashion. For the *nkumu* the skin of the *fimbo* is limited to the informal hat, *lindo*, and for making into the *lokua*, a pouch used for carrying small objects and worn like a sporran. As a corollary to the impenetrance of the *mantsh* may be noted the importance attached to the head of the *nkumu*, which must never be seen uncovered in daylight.

The Bonginda *nkumu* never wash in the daytime, but may wash at night with hot water. The inland *nkumu* never wash. Even the Bonginda *nkumu* never wash their heads, and no *nkumu* ever cuts his hair. If the *nkumu* becomes too greatly inconvenienced, one of his wives may shave his head, but only within the privacy of the house, by the light that enters the rear opening.